

## **Abstract**

A method of staining bacteria comprises: working a polymethine dye on a sample in the presence of a substance capable of reducing nitrite ions to stain bacteria in the sample. A method of 5 detecting bacteria comprises the following steps of: (1) working a polymethine dye on a sample by a method as described above to stain bacteria in the sample, (2) introducing the thus treated sample into a detecting part of a flow cytometer and irradiating cells of the stained bacteria one by one with light to measure scattered light and 10 fluorescent light emitted from each of the cells; and (3) discriminating the bacteria from other components in accordance with an intensity of a scattered light signal and an intensity of a fluorescent light signal or a pulse width reflecting the length of particles to count the bacteria.

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